

History on wheels will be traveling through the Coachella Valley during the third annual Desert Classic Concours d'Elegance.

The two-day event, which had been at the O'Donnell Golf Club in Palm Springs for the last two years, is set for Saturday and Sunday at the La Quinta Resort & Club.

Nearly 200 rare vehicles will be on display, many of them multimillion-dollar cars that are usually not shown to the public, said Paul Merrigan, founder of the Desert Classic Concours d'Elegance.

"The focus of this year's event is on the automotive design, engineering and cultural impact of the cars of the 1950s emanating from Southern California," Merrigan said. "Our approach is to encourage the use and preservation of these examples of the best of automotive design and innovation and engineering."

Net proceeds from the Desert Classic Concours d'Elegance will be donated to the Animal Samaritans SPCA and the Boys & Girls Club of Coachella Valley.
Fundraising engine

Since the start of the event, more than \$30,000 has been raised for valley organizations and charities such as Eisenhower Medical Center's Lucy Curci Cancer Center, College of the Desert and the Virginia Waring International Piano Competition, Merrigan said.

Another local perk, Merrigan added, is that the event is expected to be an economic boost for La Quinta and possibly the Coachella Valley as a whole.

"With all the people who come for this event and take up hotel rooms, eat at restaurants and shop, this brings a tremendous amount of business to the area," Merrigan said.

Republican Congressman John Campbell, who represents the 48th Congressional District, said he will be visiting the desert specifically for the car show, excited to cruise around in his 1958 Cadillac Eldorado Brougham, which is just one of 704 built in the world.

“I just happen to personally love the desert, so when there's an excuse I'm there,” Campbell said laughing during a phone interview with The Desert Sun on Tuesday from the nation's capital.

Campbell, who worked for nearly 25 years in the automotive industry representing several automobile franchises, including Nissan, Mazda, Ford, Saturn and Saab, is a car enthusiast and believes there is always something for everyone at car shows.

“Cars are kind of unique in a sense that they're art and in another they're technology and in a third sense they're part of history,” Campbell said. *“So you end up learning something new at these shows.”*

And for those who may be debating over plans this weekend, Merrigan said the annual Tour Classique should entice residents and visitors as more than 50 vintage vehicles will be on the road for the two-hour cruise around the desert.

“The entrants will be driving these fabulously amazing cars that are never usually on the road and here they're going to be cruising through the Coachella Valley,” Merrigan said.